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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: FALKLAND ISLANDS; 2/24/10; BUENOS AIRES

SUMMARY

¶1. The Falklands dispute continued to dominate Argentine media on 2/24. Most newspapers picked up remarks made by Assistant Secretary Crowley reiterating U.S. neutrality in the conflict and encouraging Argentina and Great Britain to resolve the issues through direct dialogue. A/S Crowley's characterization of the British administration of the islands generated different interpretations in the press. Several newspapers took his remarks that the U.S. "would consider" becoming a mediator between the parties if they requested it a step further to suggest the U.S. would play this role. End summary.

REPORTS OF U.S. NEUTRALITY

¶2. The Argentine press reported A/S Crowley's 2/23 press briefing in which he reiterated the U.S. neutrality in the dispute. Newspapers La Nacion (conservative) and Buenos Aires Economico (Pro-government financial daily) headlined their articles with the word neutrality between quotation marks, suggesting the U.S. favored the British government. Largest circulation Clarin quoted remarks made in 2007 by former Secretary of State Alexander Haig, who mediated between Buenos Aires and London in 1982, saying the U.S. "was never neutral in the conflict in the sense that we (the U.S.) were never impartial." Using a similar tone, pro-government newspaper Buenos Aires Economico also said Haig "admitted he was partial" in the negotiations to protect Britain, a U.S. ally since the Second World War.

DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS OF U.K. "ADMINISTRATION"

¶3. Largest circulation Clarin said A/S Crowley "recognized British governance (gobierno) of the islands," implying that the U.S. was suggesting it acknowledged British sovereignty over the Falklands Islands. Clarin's correspondent in Washington later cited comments made by former Argentine Ambassador to the UN Lucio Garcia del Solar as saying, "As far as I can remember, it is the first time the U.S. says it acknowledges the British governance (gobierno) in the islands." Clarin also quoted a source of the Argentine government as saying Crowley's comments "were not harmful, because Crowley did not recognize the government of the islanders, and he made clear that any dialogue should take place between the parties, which means Argentina and Great Britain."

Conservative La Nacion reported instead that A/S Crowley said the U.S. "recognized the British administration of the islands." Left-of-center Pagina 12 also reported the U.S. recognized British "administracion" (in quotes) of the Falklands.

<http://www.clarin.com/diario/2010/02/24/um/m-02146759.htm>

http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota_id=1236615

EXPECTATIONS OF U.S. MEDIATOR ROLE

14. Most papers also highlighted A/S Crowley's remarks that the U.S. "would consider" playing the role of mediator if requested by the parties. Although several dailies provided direct translation of his remarks, others, such as La Nacion, took A/S Crowley's remarks a step further suggesting the U.S. would accept such a role. The online edition of La Nacion reported Secretary Clinton "would be willing to 'mediate' between Buenos Aires and London."

http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota_id=1236615

<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elpais/subnotas/140913-45384-2010-02-24.html>

PRO GOVERNMENT PRESS HOLDS BRITISH "HAWKS" LIABLE FOR TENSIONS

15. Pagina 12 also published an opinion article signed by Martin Granovsky, the head of state-run news agency Telam, with the headline "The invention of a war in Malvinas (Falklands)" in which he analyzed the role of the British conservatives and the press in the conflict. He said it is reasonable for Argentina not to react with any military action after Britain announced it would start oil drilling in the islands. Granovsky says "this would only follow the game of the British hawks." Granovsky criticizes British press saying conservative "hawks" in London are "feeding the powerful (British) tabloids", setting the country's agenda.

<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elpais/subnotas/1-45386-2010-02-24.html>

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